

Bike/Walk Committee
March 16th, 2016
Minutes

Present: Keith Davis, Chair, Mariann Millard, Nancy Bozek, Marilyn Gass, Melissa O'Brien, Lucia Foley, Margaret Jodoin, Linda Young

Community Members: Enid Sichel, Doris Dubois, Mike Dubois, Kent Walsh

Guests: Roger Beers, Tony Judge, Sean Condon

Minutes of Feb. 17th were unanimously approved and the reading waived

CPA Discussion: Tony Judge introduced the Community Preservation Act and indicated that 160 cities and towns have approved this. The CPA provides dedicated funding source for affordable housing, open space and historic preservation. It affords us the opportunity to provide for projects which we couldn't otherwise afford. \$35 surcharge will be the average annual cost per household. The CPA is an opportunity to build a consensus and the Bike/Walk Committee is the perfect committee to spend this on with state and federal funds. This is a good return on our investment. The CPA will be up for discussion at a March 30th meeting at the high school library at 7 p.m. Bike/Walk Committee members are encouraged to attend to show support. April 12th is the Town election and this will be the first question on the ballot. A CPA committee will be formed by the Selectboard and they will judge the requests from various groups to make sure they meet the criteria than it goes to a Town Meeting vote. A motion to support the CPA was passed as it will benefit the Bike/Walk Committee's endeavors for the Town Master Plan for bike-pedestrian trails. This letter of support will go on the CPA WEBSITE.

PVPC Task Force. Melissa, our liaison, brought forward an update on their March meeting. Off road bike routes were not mentioned in the draft Route Evaluation chapter, nor any other chapter of the MP rec'd to date. Gary Roux of PVPC and Richard Harris, Town Planner, indicated that a new chapter could be written to focus on linkages. The BW committee discussed that deadlines/dates for the submittal of the next 2 chapters need to be agreed upon and set well in advance (a week is not enough time) for PVPC to provide the remaining 2 chapters prior to the next Task Force meeting on June 8th. A matrix listing road conditions and safety was expounded upon. Melissa will send it out to each of us as soon as it is available as well as off roads paths can could be linked. The BW Committee is not happy with what PVPC appears to be presenting for a Master Plan but Mariann will convey this to Mike Sullivan to see if we are missing something. The meat and challenging piece is to show what off road paths are possible for the future. While sidewalks, crosswalks, roadways, etc. are detailed, what is the larger, long-term picture? Where does SH see itself in terms of biking/hiking/walking 5, 10, 20 years down the road: what are the long-term vs. short-term goals? The project is lacking as it is read right now. Chapters 1-3, which we have yet to receive revisions of despite they were discussed in December of 2015, provide a summary of existing conditions and but yet the project to date, doesn't address the connectivity and off-route bikeways — both viewed as the most critical and meatiest parts of this MP which require PVPC's expert analysis. PVPC's scope of work is very generic so it is hard to tell whether they are going to present something worth \$30,000 or not (at least according to us).

Presentation by Sean Condon: As President of the Pioneer Valley Chapter of Mass Bike, he came to talk to us about the Open Streets Event being planned statewide and he would like to do about 4 in the Pioneer Valley. He is talking with his hometown of Holyoke and would like to do something that would link with South Hadley. We are enthusiastic about doing this but feel planning something for Spring 2017 would be best for us. This program closes road(s) for all kinds of activities and introduces our community to perhaps stores, restaurants, etc. that they might not otherwise partake in. The idea is to get people more active by leisurely strolling or riding through their community. It is called a Ciclovía Event and allows us to share the road mentality and

promote safety. Mass DOT may “buy” into helping to sponsor this. We will put this on our project list and Mariann will follow-up with Mike Sullivan to elicit the Town’s support and involvement. Suggested streets for this event include Holyoke’s Heritage Park/Carousel/Main Street to the Rt. 116 Bridge/Bridge Street and Beachgrounds in South Hadley.

Complete Streets Ordinance or By-law: Awhile ago Mike Sullivan asked the Bike/Walk Committee for our support. Several town employees in February went to a Complete Street Workshop which is a requirement towards the town vote. We don’t know whether to support an ordinance or general by-law policy and Mariann will bring this up with Mike Sullivan when she meets with him. We will need to know if this is for this coming May Town Meeting or will it be considered for the Fall. This ordinance includes bike and pedestrian safety features with regards to Town roads. BWC believes Richard Harris, Town Planner, will most likely be charged by the Town to write South Hadley’s piece with the help of Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent.

Networking Meeting Discussion: Goal is to talk with other interested committees, commissions, town departments and other interested groups to brainstorm ideas such as the Open Streets initiative and to discuss the Master Bike/Walk Plan as we know it to date and to obtain feedback, etc. We will invite these parties to our May 18th meeting.

2016 Project List: Due to the time factor, Mariann led a brief discussion of pertinent items on the List, which resulted in the members’ decision to discontinue the BWC’s Google web site, now that BWC has an official page on the Town website. Larry Dubois will be asked by his son, Mike, who attended as a guest, to discontinue it as soon as possible. Our Google website will also need to be redirected to our Town WEBSITE. The Town does not have the capability to give us a Town e-mail account so we will remain with our Google e-mail address for our official distribution list, which is currently being handled by Melissa O’Brien for BWC email alerts as a back-up to Larry.

The Town WEBSITE has been updated by Lucia and perhaps she and Enid can work on more material. Our trek blurbs need to go on the WEBSITE, which Mariann will provide to Lucia for posting..

NEXT TREK is Sunday, March 20th at 1 p.m. at Lithia Springs Reservoir off of Route 116 near the Amherst town line, on the left just before you start up the hill. April 17th will be the next one at Bynan Conservation property. Kenny Rogers has decided not to lead this walk because he is angry with the ATVs and other vehicles that are ruining this beautiful piece of property. Mariann (as trek leader) and Nancy (as sweep) will lead this trek as originally planned to publicly encourage the appropriate and legal use of the property via a walking hike. We agreed that having a BWC member or another designated person (designated by the trek leader) to play “sweep” at the end of the line of walkers for every trek provides the safest measure for our public treks. Based on Chief Labrie’s email response to Mariann that there was no need for advance notification to the Police Department, we agreed not to call the police dispatcher ahead of time and to rely on 911 to bring help if an emergency arises.

Salem Spins is a Salem Bike Sharing Program brought to our attention by Marilyn Gass. It was started in 2011 and offers bicycles free of charge for use around their city. Their fleet began with 20 bicycles with two hubs. Salem was awarded \$25,000 from a Green Communities grant program to purchase this bike fleet. Fees are charged to a participant’s credit card only if they return the bike late or damaged. It is open only to people over the age of 18 but Salem is considering a change. They may also produce bike map for participants and offer a “seasonal pass” where bikes could be used for more than one day at a time. Marilyn also noted that the map of bike trails in Orleans on the Cape was produced partially through a Community Preservation Grant.

Mariann asked if two pieces of information could be permanently placed on our agenda so that we are in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Both have to do with conducting business that comes to the Chair’s attention AFTER the agenda has been submitted to the Town. Keith took this information and will place it on all future agendas.

NEXT MEETING IS April 20th.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Submitted by Linda Young, Clerk